



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good afternoon.

The interest of volunteer vacations, better known as voluntourism, is steadily increasing. In fact, a recent survey from Travelocity.com, indicates 38 percent of more than 1,000 respondents were interested in taking a vacation where they can give back and make a difference during their stay.

By volunteering for a variety of service-related projects that improve our state, visitors build a stronger connection to Arizona and gain a deeper understanding of our state's exciting history, culture, geography, and environment.

For example, Arizona's state parks have nearly 900 volunteers, many of whom are visitors to the state. They conduct service projects throughout the year, such as serving as a campground host, cleaning up and fixing trails, monitoring archaeological sites, and repairing historic buildings. However, these parks still need another 700 volunteers to fill in during the slow times of the year when a majority of the volunteers return home for the summer.

There are many volunteer opportunities at Arizona's state and national parks. For volunteer information, please visit the [What to Do, Special Interests](#) section of www.arizonaguide.com.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director

AOT News Flash

Send in Your Governor's Tourism Award Nominations!

The Arizona Office of Tourism invites you to submit your nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards**. These industry awards honor individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. These award recipients are fine examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

All submissions must be received by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2008.

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at kcouchon@azot.gov.

To register for the conference please visit, www.aztourismconference.com.

SAVE the DATE: ATU Workshop – How to Create Effective Collateral Material

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop: "**How to Create Effective Collateral Material**."

Are you looking for ways to make your brochures, rack cards, flyers, travel guides and fact sheets stand out from the pack? Do you want to learn how to get the biggest bang for your buck and how to avoid expensive mistakes when producing printed marketing materials? Join us for the next ATU workshop "**How to Create Effective Collateral Materials**" and you will learn about the five key processes in creating brochures, guides and other travel collateral – from project inception to the distribution of your final product. Find out about the best practices in creating collateral materials from a professional travel writing editor. Hear about design and print production considerations from a printer. Learn tips and strategies that will result in marketing collateral that delivers. Register now by contacting Meghan Dorn at 602-364-3708 or mdorn@azot.gov.

The workshop will be held in the following locations:

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Blazin' M Ranch](#)

Cottonwood, AZ, 86326

928-634-0334

Thursday, May 15, 2008

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

[Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort](#)

10000 N. Oracle Rd
Tucson, AZ 85704
520-544-5000

AOT Plans for 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide Publication

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Travel Industry Marketing Division is publishing the 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide. PTPG is the official fulfillment publication for the AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Division. This comprehensive statewide guide assists tour operators and travel agents in the U.S. and in key international countries as they create group and individual tour packages throughout Arizona.

With a circulation of 25,000 annually, PTPG is distributed by AOT's international offices (Japan, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain, France and Germany), at domestic and international trade shows, and at national promotional events. It is also direct-mailed to clients in AOT's database, as well as in response to client inquiries. Additionally, PTPG will be available for instant download on AOT's Web site.

PTPG includes extensive itineraries, maps, events, motorcoach, and tour information designed to identify operators' needs and educate them on the range and diversity of destinations, attractions and facilities in Arizona. The publication also includes Resource Guides with Directory Listings for the following categories.

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Restaurants
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Transportation

For additional information and to obtain a media kit, contact Kathleen Lockhart of Hennen Publishing and Marketing Group at kathleen@hennenpmg.com or at 480-664-0541.

SAVE the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops are here!

In an effort to continually offer the best in visitor services to the traveling public, AOT conducts a complimentary certification program for Arizona's visitor center staff and front-line hospitality employees. The Grand Impressions program is designed to enhance customer service skills, present a unified message to visitors, and to increase knowledge of the state and its attractions. Front-line employees within the tourism industry and individuals in city, county, state and tribal government agencies that deal directly with visitors are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops. Specific program details will follow in the coming weeks!

Workshops will be held on the following dates and locations.

Friday, May 30, 2008

Holiday Inn Express
850 W Shell Road
Nogales, Arizona

Friday, June 6, 2008

Lowell Observatory
1400 W Mars Hill Rd

Flagstaff, Arizona

Trippin' with AOT

What a Difference a Day Makes!

Nearly 350 travel industry professionals descended upon New Orleans to spend a day cleaning up one of America's heritage landmarks, Louis Armstrong Park for the annual Tourism Cares for America volunteer program. Louis Armstrong Park is central to African American and musical history. In the 18th and 19th centuries slaves would gather in the park's Congo Square to play music in the open – the only time it was permitted. In present day, the park is home to the Mahalia Jackson Center for the Performing Arts, the Morris F X Jeff Auditorium as well as other significant buildings. The park represents the legacy and dignity of Louis Armstrong and all of the jazz greats who honed their skills performing along the African-American Jazz Corridor in New Orleans. Together with Congo Square, this area represents one of the most important locations of African-American heritage in the country. After a breakfast of café au lait and beniets, the volunteer crew marched through the streets of the French Quarter, led by Master of Ceremonies, Chef Paul Prudhomme, and ended up at the gate of Armstrong Park. There, volunteers were assigned various clean-up duties such as landscaping, painting and upkeep that would have taken the park's staff months to complete. The efforts of the Tourism Cares for New Orleans volunteers to restore this site not only restored its physical appearance, it recognized its historical importance, honored its forefathers, and helped the local community to reconnect with one of its most important cultural touchstones. In addition to the clean up, the Louis Armstrong statue was rededicated to include the Tourism Cares organization in support of restoration in New Orleans. View photo on Times Square Jumbotron, [click here](#) or view the [YouTube](#) video.

Tourism Cares for America is a volunteer program to help preserve, conserve and protect tourism related sites in America that need care and rejuvenation. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or e-mail jsutcliffe@azot.gov or visit www.tourismcares.org.

Arizona Well Represented on German Sales Mission

AOT recently traveled to Germany for a week-long sales mission with an eight member Arizona delegation. Hylton Fothergill, AOT's Travel Industry Marketing Manager, was joined on the mission by the following partners: Scottsdale CVB, Tucson CVB, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Casino, Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa, Tanque Verde Ranch in Tucson, Best Western Grand Canyon Squire Inn, Red Rock Jeep Tours from Sedona and Antelope Canyon Tours. The mission began in Frankfurt and continued to Cologne, Hannover and Hamburg. In each location the delegates conducted training sessions and product meetings at the offices of the key tour operators, followed by sponsored evening networking events for area travel professionals. For more information on this sales mission, please contact Hylton Fothergill at 602-364-3706 or via e-mail at hfothergill@azot.gov.

Industry News

Korea Set to Join Visa Waiver Program

As early as later this year, citizens of Korea may be able to travel to the U.S. without a visa, as the country has signed a memorandum of understanding to join the Visa Waiver Program. The Department of Homeland Security said Korea is on track to meet security standards outlined in the agreement. The DHS said it will establish an electronic system of travel authorization for air passengers. VWP travelers will be asked to provide basic information online, which will generate

an authorization for air travel. The VWP currently has 27 member countries from Asia and Europe. The U.S. has signed enhanced VWP agreements with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania and Malta in recent weeks. In a statement Friday, the Travel Industry Association praised the expansion of the program to include Korea, which it called one of America's closest allies and most important travel partners. "Hundreds of thousands of additional Korean visitors will boost the American economy and help reverse the drastic decline in overseas travel to the United States," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of TIA. (Special to TA: www.TravelWeekly.com, 4/18)

Chinese Want to Visit Grand Canyon and Disney

Could the US emerge as a No. 1 site for Chinese visitors? "New research from Taylor Nelson Sofres plc (TNS), a world leader in market information and insight, shows that the United States could emerge as a new highlight for China's outbound tourists," says the company, which adds: "For a long time, the destinations most frequently visited by outbound Chinese tourists were Hong Kong and the neighboring enclave of Macao. But that is set to change." One major reason is the 2007 agreement between China and the United States, which set the terms of Approved Destination Status (ADS) for the US. Under ADS, Chinese nationals can obtain a tourist visa for entry into the United States, provided that travel is organized by a tour operator approved by the Chinese National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Another driver for Chinese interest: the continuing depreciation of the dollar. The TNS study says that discloses that about 20 percent of those planning to tour outside China in the coming year cite the US among their favorite destinations. Among potential visitors age 36 or above, the figure is even higher at 29 percent, ranking the United States in the top five most desirable destinations — alongside Europe, Hong Kong, Australia/New Zealand and South Korea — and beating the traditional favorite, Southeast Asia. Over half of all respondents cited the US as a desirable destination. For those aged 36 or above, the figure rises to almost two thirds. "The TNS study reveals a hunger for the great outdoors, with 'seeing the Grand Canyon' as the top choice. Viewing New York City from the top of the Empire State Building came second," said the survey summary. Touring the White House, the Statue of Liberty and visiting Walt Disney World in Florida trailed behind. (Report by David Wilkening, TravelMole e-Newsletter)

Travel Industry Eyes Tax Rebates

Next week, the first of 130 million Americans will begin getting tax rebate checks designed to help jump-start a sputtering U.S. economy. And travel marketers, already skittish about the effects of lofty airfares and record gas prices, are out to convince them that it's their patriotic duty to spend the cash--up to \$600 for individuals, \$1,200 for couples and \$300 for a dependent child under 17--on a trip away from home. But whether the come-ons will inspire plans for a summer vacation or spur resentment from debt-burdened consumers is open to debate. According to a USA Today/Gallop Poll of 1,016 U.S. adults last weekend, only one of five respondents said they were likely to use part or all of the rebate for a vacation or travel, and 64 percent said they were "not at all likely" to spend it for that purpose. A March poll by travel insurance vendor Access America, meanwhile, found that 11 percent of surveyed households making at least \$50,000 in annual income planned to spend the rebate on travel. (Page 4D, USA Today)

Airfares Increased 4% in 4thQ, But Still Cheaper than in 2000

The average U.S. air fare increased by 4 percent during the fourth quarter of 2007, federal data show, but was still cheaper than tickets purchased during the same period of 2000. The average domestic fare, round-trip or one way for which no return is purchased, reached \$331 during the final quarter of 2007, as airlines began to raise prices to offset higher fuel costs. That's the highest fourth-quarter pricing in six years, according to the Department of Transportation's Bureau of

Transportation Statistics. But it is still 2.7 percent lower than the average price airlines charged in late 2000, before the aviation industry was hammered by a recession and a fall-off in travel following the Sept.11 attacks. (www.ChicagoTribune.com/Business; Page 3B, USA Today)

U.S., Vienna Lead International Conventions

The U.S. was the most popular country in which to hold international association meetings last year, for the third consecutive year. Vienna was the most popular city destination, according to yearly rankings released by the International Congress and Convention Association. The rankings cover meetings organized by international associations, which take place on a regular basis and which rotate between a minimum of three countries. This year the ICCA Data researchers identified over 6,500 such events which took place last year, a rise of approximately 800 over 2006. Following the U.S., Germany was ranked the second most-popular country for international events, with Spain third. Among cities, Berlin was No. 2 and Singapore third. The full ICCA statistic report for 2007 will be released in early June. (www.MiMegasite.com, 4/21)

New Study Details Role of Travel Agencies

Travel agents are still an integral part of the travel industry, says a recent report from industry research group PhoCusWright. According to the firm's Travel Agency Distribution Landscape 2006-2009, travel agents accounted for nearly \$110 billion in sales or 41 percent of all travel booked in the U.S. The report was conducted jointly with ASTA, ARC, CLIA and Performance Media Group and polled nearly 1,900 agents, including storefront and home-based agents. Details at www.phocuswright.com. (www.TravelAgentCentral.com, 4/23; www.ModernAgent.com, 4/22)